

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEHRAN 04016 271317Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----069352 281454Z /47

R 271235Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8048
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T TEHRAN 04016

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: SGDS 3
TAGS: MNUC, MASS, ENRG, EAID, FR, PK, IR
SUBJ: PAKISTAN REPROCESSING ISSUE

REF: ISLAMABAD 4065

1. REFTEL SUGGESTS THAT I MIGHT COMMENT ON WHAT ROLE THE SHAH MIGHT BE PREPARED TO PLAY IN A PUTATIVE U.S.-FRENCH SCENARIO DESIGNED TO SOFTEN THE BLOW TO PAKISTAN OF A DECISIVE FRENCH ACTION TO CANCEL THE REPROCESSING PLANT CONTRACT. ALTHOUGH I DON'T HAVE A FULL GRASP OF ALL ELEMENTS INVOLVED, I HAVE MANAGED TO DISCERN THE GENERAL OUTLINE FROM READING THE SEVERAL RELEVANT CABLES.

2. MY FIRST COMMENT IS THAT I BELIEVE THE SHAH WOULD LIKE TO PLAY A ROLE IN THIS SCENARIO. FIRST OF ALL, PAKISTAN, AS IRAN'S IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOR AND ALLY, IS OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE TO IRAN AND THE SHAH FEELS HE HAS A DIRECT INTEREST IN ANY ACTIONS THE U.S. MIGHT TAKE WHICH WOULD AFFECT ITS STABILITY AND SECURITY. SECONDLY, HE FEELS HE HAS UNDERSTANDINGS WITH THE UNITED STATES WHICH WOULD ENTAIL CONSULTATION WITH HIM ON MATTERS OF THIS IMPORTANCE. THIRDLY, HE ALWAYS PERFORMS BEST AND MOST GENEROUSLY WHEN HE IS INCLUDED

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AS AN EQUAL PARTNER IN "BIG LEAGUE" ACTIONS SUCH AS A U.S.-FRENCH CONCERTED PROGRAM OF THIS SORT.

3. I FIND IT DIFFICULT TO BE SPECIFIC ON THE ACTIONS WHICH THE SHAH MIGHT BE PREPARED TO TAKE BUT BELIEVE IT SAFE TO STATE THAT THEY WOULD BE CONSTRUCTIVE AND THAT THEY WOULD REINFORCE THE U.S. POSITION, ESPECIALLY IF THERE IS ANY

WAVERING BY THE FRENCH. IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT THE SHAH HAS SIGNIFICANT LEVERAGE WITH THE FRENCH WHICH, AT THE VERY LEAST, CAN BE MEASURED IN TERMS OF FOUR TO SIX ADDITIONAL FRAMATONE REACTORS WHICH FRANCE HOPES TO SELL TO IRAN.

4. THE SHAH ALSO HAS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF INFLUENCE WITH THE INDIANS. HE MIGHT BE WILLING TO WEIGH IN WITH DELHI IN AN EFFORT TO GET INDIA TO ACCEPT FULL-SCALE SAFEGUARDS FOR ITS NUCLEAR PROGRAM. IF THIS COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED, IT WOULD PRESUMABLY GIVE THE PAKS A REASON FOR REDUCING THEIR CURRENT PREOCCUPATION WITH REPROCESSING AND MIGHT EVEN PROVIDE THEM WITH A FACE-SAVING REASON FOR CHANGING THEIR INSISTENCE UPON FRENCH FULFILLMENT OF THE ORIGINAL CONTRACT. I REALIZE THAT DESAI HAS SET CONDITIONS FOR SAFEGUARDS WHICH ARE IN THE US-UK-USSR ORBIT AND THEREFORE PRESUMABLY OUT OF THE SHAH'S REACH. HOWEVER, IF HE IS WILLING TO LEAN ON THE INDIANS, THAT MIGHT ENHANCE HIS LEVERAGE WITH THE PAKS.

5. IN TERMS OF CARROTS FOR PAKISTAN, THERE ARE CURRENTLY SEVERAL IRANIAN AID PROGRAMS UNDERWAY OR UNDER DISCUSSION WHICH COULD BE ENHANCED. THE DEFERRAL OF PAKISTAN'S DEBT PAYMENTS TO IRAN IS A CASE IN POINT. THERE ARE ALSO SOME DOWN-RANGE PROSPECTS WHICH MIGHT BE CONSIDERED IN THE MILITARY FIELD. FOR EXAMPLE, IF AND WHEN IRAN GETS THE ADDITIONAL F-14 AND F-16 AIRCRAFT IT SEEKS TO BUY FROM THE U.S., THE
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SHAH MIGHT BE WILLING, WITH U.S. CONSENT, TO TRANSFER SOME OF HIS F-5 FLEET TO PAKISTAN AT LITTLE OR NO COST. IRAN CAN ALSO OFFER MAINTENANCE AND REBUILD FACILITIES TO PAKISTAN AT NO COST, AS IT IS DOING IN THE CASE OF THE M-48 TANKS.

6. IN SUM, WHILE I FEEL IT WOULD BE PREMATURE FOR ME TO ATTEMPT TO SPECIFY THE WAYS IN WHICH IRAN COULD BE HELPFUL, I STRONGLY URGE THAT THE SHAH BE INCLUDED, AS AN EQUAL PARTNER, IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANY U.S.-FRENCH SCENARIO WHICH WE WOULD EXPECT TO EVOLVE IN THIS EFFORT. THE SOONER THE INCLUSION IS ARRANGED, THE BETTER.

7. ONE FINAL OBSERVATION. I NOTE THAT REFTTEL SUGGESTS SAUDI ARABIA AS AN ADDITIONAL SOURCE OF POTENTIAL ASSISTANCE. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE SAUDIS, ESPECIALLY IF THE CONGRESS SHOULD KILL THE F15 DEAL, MIGHT BECOME AN OBSTACLE RATHER THAN AN AID TO THE U.S.-FRENCH SCENARIO. I COULD ENVISAGE THEM SUPPLYING THE MEANS WHICH WOULD ENABLE PAKISTAN TO FINANCE THE COMPLETION OF AN ABORTED FRENCH CONTRACT PROVIDED THEY COULD RECEIVE SOME OF THE WEAPONS PRODUCTION FROM THE PAKISTANI PROGRAM. IF THIS ASPECT FEATURED IN THE RECENT ZIA DISCUSSIONS IN RIYADH, THE SAUDI FACTOR MAY

HAVE TO BE EXAMINED IN ITS NEGATIVE, AS WELL AS POSITIVE
POTENTIALS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic DecapTIONing: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, CONSTRUCTION, NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS, CONTRACTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 apr 1978
DecapTION Date: 01 jan 1960
DecapTION Note:
Disposition Action: Released in Full
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: 200701217
Disposition Comment: RECORDING OF CLASSIFICATION/RECLASSIFICATION ACTION IN SAS (STATE ARCHIVING SYSTEM) BY THE DESIGNATED AUTHORITY FOR THIS ACTION, WHO HAS APPROVED RECLASSIFICATION AND OR EXTENSION ACTION ON THIS DOCUMENT.
Disposition Date: 15 aug 2007
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: Released in Full by ARCHIE BOLSTER on 15-AUG-07 ;
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TEHRAN04016
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780182-0334
Format: TEL
From: TEHRAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978048/aaaaagdd.tel
Line Count: 119
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c3e934b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 ISLAMABAD 4065
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3035877
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PAKISTAN REPROCESSING ISSUE
TAGS: MNUC, MASS, ENRG, EAID, FR, PK, IR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c3e934b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014